



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 September 2019

by David Wallis BSc (HONS) PG DipEP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 September 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/C3620/W/19/3228692

165 Cobham Road, Fetcham, Leatherhead KT22 9JD

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Darron Mitchell against the decision of Mole Valley District Council.
 - The application Ref MO/2019/0010/PLA, dated 3 January 2019, was refused by notice dated 21 February 2019.
 - The development proposed is Insertion of 2 No. dormer windows and new first floor window to front elevation to facilitate conversion of loft space into a one bedroom flat.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the Insertion of 2 No. dormer windows and new first floor window to front elevation to facilitate conversion of loft space into a one bedroom flat at 165 Cobham Road, Fetcham, Leatherhead KT22 9JD in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref MO/2019/0010/PLA, dated 3 January 2019, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following plans: 165-001, 165-002, 165-003 and 165-004, all dated 28 November 2018.
 - 3) Prior to the first occupation of the development, details for the secure parking of bicycles within the development site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall be implemented prior to first occupation of the development and shall be retained as such thereafter.

Main Issue

2. The main issue for the appeal is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The local area contains a mix of residential and commercial properties. In general, no two dwellings are exactly alike, except for the uniform consistency of the terraced properties in Cobham Road. With no distinctive architectural style, the roofscape in Cobham Road and surrounding streets is highly varied.

This provides visual interest and diversity to the street scene. Where properties have dormer windows, these vary in design, proportion and position within their respective roof slopes.

4. The appeal site consists of a two-storey dwelling with a symmetrical front elevation. The ridge of the roof runs parallel to Cobham Road, with chimneys at each gable. It is set back modestly from the public highway and sits adjacent a two-storey commercial building with a large expanse of flat roof.
5. The proposal would introduce two flat roof dormers into the front elevation of the appeal site. The development would be visible only to localised views and would be seen in context with the wider street scene. Although large in proportion, they are comparable to others in the area and would not appear incongruous as a result. There would be proportionate spacing either side of and in between the dormers to provide an uninterrupted roof slope and maintain balance to the front elevation.
6. The dormers would maintain the symmetry of the appeal site and thus harmonise with the existing building. When taken in context with the diverse range of property design in the surrounding area, the dormers would add to the visual interest of the locality. I acknowledge the LPA found the proposed rooflights to be an acceptable element of the development. I find no reason to disagree.
7. The proposal would therefore be compatible with the character and appearance of the area. It would be compliant with policies CS14 of the adopted Mole Valley Core October 2009, as well as policies ENV22 and ENV23 of the adopted Mole Valley Local Plan October 2000. These policies, amongst other things, seek design that respects the character and appearance of the locality.

Other Matters

8. I note agreement between the parties that the Local Planning Authority (LPA) cannot demonstrate a deliverable five-year housing land supply. Therefore, the tilted balance is invoked and paragraph 11(d) engaged. The proposal would make the best possible use of previously developed land, achieving a new dwelling on an existing plot contributing to the local housing stock and supporting existing shops and services. This weighs positively in favour of the development.
9. Concerns have been raised regarding parking provision, although the Highway Authority raises no objection. On my site visit I observed a reasonable sized frontage to the appeal site that allows for the parking and turning of cars clear of the public highway. The proposal would not represent a harm to highway safety. Given that the site is close to shops, services and public transportation, this is an accessible location.

Conditions

10. The proposed condition from the Highway Authority regarding bicycle storage would encourage the use of alternative transport modes to the private car and should be encouraged. I have sought to impose this condition, subject to modification to make it enforceable, and the standard conditions regarding implementation for the avoidance of doubt as to the nature of the development hereby permitted.

11. The LPA suggested a condition regarding renewable energy. However, I do not consider this necessary to make the development acceptable.

Conclusion

12. I find the proposal to be in accordance with the Development Plan. The proposal would also provide economic, social and environmental benefits that weigh in favour of the development. The proposal would therefore be sustainable development. The appeal is allowed.

David Wallis

INSPECTOR